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Serial No. 09/715,439
Attorney Ref. No. 1205-002/JRD**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (currently amended) A method for tracking prescription orders through a pharmacy having a plurality of physically spaced apart locations for filling the prescription order, the plurality of spaced apart locations positioned along a workflow stream leading to a storage area with an array of compartments for storing filled prescription orders therein, said method including the following steps:

receiving a prescription order at a first location upstream of the storage area;

operably securing tagging the prescription order with a remote machine-readable tag to the prescription order upstream of said storage area, said tag having a unique identifier that is readable by a tag reader in proximity to the tag regardless of its orientation relative to the tag reader; that stays with the prescription order;

associating the unique identifier of the remote tag with customer information associated stored in a computer system in association with the prescription order upstream of the storage area;

manually moving the prescription order to one of the compartments in the array of compartments as a filled prescription order, each compartment having a corresponding compartment tag reader that is in communication with the computer system and is operable to read the unique identifier of the tag on the filled prescription order regardless of the orientation of the tag; and

automatically recording at the computer system the compartment where the filled prescription order at said second location and updating the computer system to indicate that the prescription order is not at the second location.

2. (previously presented) The method for tracking prescription orders through a pharmacy of claim 1, further including the steps of:

displaying the location of the prescription order on a computer system display, thereby facilitating the easy location of said prescription order.

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3. (currently amended) The method for tracking prescription orders through a pharmacy of ~~claim 2~~ claim 1, further including the steps of: ~~wherein said moving step includes moving said prescription order to at least three spaced apart locations within the pharmacy, and further including:~~

~~taking the prescription order at the first location;~~

~~storing the filled prescription order at a third location; and,~~

~~automatically detecting the presence of the prescription order at the third location by sensing the remote tag attached to the order when said remote tag is in the proximity of said third location~~

manually moving the prescription order to a second location within the pharmacy upstream of the storage area, the second location having a second location tag reader in communication with the computer system;

automatically detecting the presence of the prescription order at the second location by reading the unique identifier of the remote tag with said second location tag reader regardless of the orientation of said tag; and,

automatically recording at the computer system the location of the prescription order at said second location.

4. (currently amended) The method for tracking prescription orders through a pharmacy of ~~claim 4~~ claim 3, further including the steps of:

automatically collecting timing information about the amount of time the prescription order remains at the second location;

storing said timing information into the computer system; and,

compiling workflow information based on the timing information.

5. (previously presented) The method for tracking prescription orders through a pharmacy of claim 4, further including the step of:

associating the workflow information with a particular worker to evaluate worker efficiency.

6. (currently amended) The method for tracking prescription order through a pharmacy of ~~claim 5~~ claim 1, wherein said pharmacy is a retail pharmacy.

7. (cancelled)

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8. (cancelled)

9. (currently amended) A prescription order tracking system for use in a retail pharmacy having a first station therein for filling the prescription order orders that each have a separate machine-readable tag operably secured thereto, each separate machine-readable tag having a unique tag identifier that uniquely identifies the prescription order to which the machine-readable tag is operably secured, said first station positioned along a workflow stream leading to a storage device structure with an array of compartments for storing filled prescription orders therein, said tracking system including:

a computer system having a display;

~~a tag operably secured to the prescription order; and~~

a first tag reader positioned near the first station and in communication with said computer system. said first station not being a storage structure with an array of compartments, said first tag reader ~~able to automatically detect the presence of~~ reading said tag when ~~said tag it is in close proximity~~ the vicinity of said first tag reader and ~~and sending a first the unique tag identifier~~ signal to said computer system; and

plural compartment tag readers, each of which is associated with a corresponding compartment in the array of compartments and is in communication with said computer system, each compartment tag reader reading the tag operably secured to any filled prescription order placed in the corresponding compartment and sending the unique tag identifier signal of the tag to said computer system with a compartment location signal that uniquely identifies the compartment where the filled prescription order is placed;

wherein said computer system displays whether the prescription order is located at said first station or in a specified one of said plural compartment in said storage structure wherein said computer system processes said signal to display the presence of said tag at said first station, thereby displaying the location of said prescription order.

10. (currently amended) The prescription order tracking system of claim 9, ~~further including:~~

~~a second station spaced apart from said first station; and wherein said second station has a second tag reader positioned in communication with said computer~~

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~~system, said second tag reader able to automatically detect the presence of said tag when said tag is in close proximity of said second tag reader and send a second signal to said computer system;~~

~~wherein said computer system processes said first signal and said second signal to display the location of said tag at one of said first and second stations, thereby displaying the location of said prescription order wherein the compartment tag readers associated with corresponding apartments each include an antenna and the antennas of plural tag readers are activated and read by a tag activating circuit in a multiplexed manner.~~

11. (cancelled)

12. (cancelled)

13. (currently amended) The prescription order tracking system of ~~claim 12~~ claim 10, wherein said tag reader circuit includes is an electromagnetic field generator, and said tag is includes an electromagnetic antenna.

14. (cancelled)

15. (previously presented) The prescription order tracking system of claim 9, wherein said tag is detachably secured to said prescription order.

16. (currently amended) The prescription order tracking system of claim 9, wherein said tag is rigidly fixedly secured to said prescription order.

17. (previously presented) The prescription order tracking system of claim 9, wherein said tag is secured to a carrier for receiving the prescription order therein.

18. (cancelled)

19. (previously presented) The prescription order tracking system of claim 9, wherein said computer system monitors the time interval said tag remains at said first location and compiles workflow information based on said time interval.

20. (previously presented) The prescription order tracking system of claim 19, wherein said computer system correlates said workflow information with a particular worker to compile efficiency information on that worker.

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21. (currently amended) The prescription order tracking system of claim 19, wherein said computer system monitors the amount of time said prescription order remains within a particular ~~cubby~~ compartment and automatically signals when said time exceeds a predetermined amount, thereby allowing a pharmacy worker to restock said prescription order.

22. (previously presented) The prescription order tracking system of claim 9, wherein said tag reader is rigidly secured at said first station.

23. (previously presented) The prescription order tracking system of claim 9, wherein said tag reader is hand-held.

24. (cancelled)

25. (cancelled)

26. (currently amended) The prescription order tracking system of ~~claim 24~~ claim 10 wherein, ~~further including a switching device in communication with said first tag detector, reader includes an antenna positioned near the first station and the prescription order tracking system further includes a switching device said compartment tag detector, and said computer system such that signal information is collected from said first and compartment tag detectors that provides~~ at predetermined time intervals tag reading multiplexing between the antennas of the compartment tag readers and the antenna near the first station.

27. (currently amended) The prescription order tracking system of ~~claim 24~~ claim 9, wherein:

said first tag reader is able to automatically detect when said tag is moved away from being in close proximity to said first tag reader and to send a second signal to said computer system.

28. (previously presented) The prescription order tracking system of claim 27, wherein said computer system monitors the time between receiving said first signal and said second signal to determine worker performance at the first station.

29. (cancelled)

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30. (previously presented) The prescription order tracking system of claim 9, where said tag is a radio-frequency identification ("RFID") tag.

31. (cancelled)

32. (cancelled)

33. (cancelled)

34. (cancelled)

35. (cancelled)

36. (cancelled)

37. (cancelled)

38. (cancelled)

39. (cancelled)

40. (cancelled)

41. (cancelled)

42. (cancelled)

43. (cancelled)

44. (currently amended) A method for ensuring that a pharmacy worker distributes the correct prescription order to a customer of the pharmacy, the pharmacy having a storage portion with ~~a plurality~~ an array of individually identified storage areas therein, each individually identified storage area having a unique visual identifier, ~~and a tag reader operably secured thereto, the tag reader in communication with a computer system;~~ said method comprising:

receiving a prescription order at a first location spaced apart from the storage area within the pharmacy;

operably securing a remote machine-readable tag to the prescription order, the remote machine-readable tag having a unique tag identifier readable when placed in proximity to ~~each~~ a tag reader regardless of orientation of the tag relative to the tag

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~~reader within the storage portion;~~

~~the computer system associating the remote machine-readable tag with
customer information associated with the prescription order in the computer system;~~

~~filling the prescription order defining a filled prescription order;~~

~~placing the filled prescription order and the remote machine-readable tag into
one individually identified storage area of the plurality of individually identified storage
areas without instructions from the computer system as to which individually identified
storage area the filled prescription order and the remote machine-readable tag are to
be placed thereby defining a pharmacy worker selected storage area and placing the
tag in proximity to the tag reader operably secured to the pharmacy worker selected
storage area;~~

~~reading the unique tag identifier of the tag the tag reader within the pharmacy
worker selected storage area detecting the unique tag identifier of the tag with a tag
reader that is associated with the pharmacy worker selected storage area, but not with
any other individually identified storage areas in the array;~~

~~providing the unique tag identifier and the storage area identifier for the
pharmacy worker selected storage area to the computer system;~~

~~the computer system correlating the customer information, unique tag identifier,
and storage area identifier;~~

~~retrieving the customer information from the computer system to determine the
storage area identifier associated with the pharmacy worker selected storage area in
which the customer's filled prescription order is located; and,~~

~~retrieving the filled prescription order from the identified pharmacy worker
selected storage area of the storage portion.~~

45. (previously presented) The method of claim 44, wherein said tag is a
radio-frequency identification ("RFID") tag and said tag readers are RFID readers.

46. (previously presented) The method of claim 44, wherein said storage area
identifier is not related to information contained within the customer information.

47. (previously presented) The method of claim 44, wherein said storage area
identifier is numeric.

48. (currently amended) The method of claim 44, further including:

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detecting the removal of the tag from the pharmacy worker selected storage area by the tag reader ~~operably secured to~~ associated with the pharmacy worker selected storage area.

49. (currently amended) The method of claim 48, further including:
monitoring with the computer system the time the tag remains within the pharmacy worker selected storage area ~~by the computer system~~.

50. (previously presented) The method of claim 44, further including placing a second filled prescription order with a second unique remote tag operably secured thereto within the pharmacy worker selected storage area such that the filled prescription order and the second filled prescription order concurrently occupy the same pharmacy worker selected storage area, and wherein the computer system associates customer identifying information for the second filled prescription, the second prescription order and the storage identifier.

51. (previously presented) The method of claim 50, wherein the computer system detects the removal of the prescription order from the pharmacy selected storage area during the retrieving the prescription order step, and detects the continued presence of the second prescription order within the pharmacy selected storage area during the retrieving the prescription order step.

52. (cancelled)

53. (cancelled)

54. (cancelled)

55. (cancelled)

56. (cancelled)

57. (cancelled)

58. (cancelled)

59. (cancelled)

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60. (cancelled)

61. (cancelled)